



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Public Instruction  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

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\*\*\* NEWS RELEASE \*\*\*

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## Milwaukee receives \$375,000 to support Alliance for Attendance

*Grants support increasing attendance in six schools*

MADISON—State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster announced \$375,000 in funding to support Alliance for Attendance efforts in six Milwaukee schools.

“The Alliance for Attendance, a broad coalition of Milwaukee community leaders, is making strides to increase students’ school attendance,” Burmaster said. “The energy and collaboration of Alliance stakeholders to support our young people in attending school and achieving academic success is a model for other districts. School attendance is critical in our efforts to close the achievement gap.”

State Rep. Peggy Krusick (D-Milwaukee), a member of the Alliance for Attendance Truancy Abatement Task Force and author of most of the state’s truancy laws, said that grant funding will help the Alliance in its work to ensure that Milwaukee students stay in school. “These additional resources support our sustained communitywide effort to help get students back in the classroom where they belong,” she said. “Teachers cannot teach to empty seats. By working together, we can engage students, their families, and the rest of the community to curb truancy and improve students’ school attendance.”

Alliance for Attendance grants are supporting efforts at **Bradley Technology and Trade, Custer, Pulaski, and Vincent** high schools and **Edison and Muir** middle schools. Funding will help each school implement a school-based truancy prevention and intervention plan, provide home visits, and collaborate with Milwaukee’s Truancy Abatement and Burglary Suppression (TABS) program to improve attendance.

The schools were eligible for funding based on progress on the four annual measurable objectives used to determine adequate yearly progress under Wisconsin’s plan to meet federal No Child Left Behind Act accountability requirements. Those objectives are test participation, graduation and attendance criteria, and achievement levels in reading and mathematics.

(more)

During the 2003-04 school year, Burmaster's concerns over student attendance in Milwaukee lead her to conduct a series of meetings with students, parents, educators, and other community leaders to learn more about what could be done to reduce truancy. At that time, Milwaukee accounted for about 11 percent of state enrollment and 50 percent of the state's habitual truants. In June 2004, Burmaster shared information from her student roundtable discussions with Milwaukee's countywide truancy committee and other community leaders.

The first Alliance for Attendance summit was held in August 2004 to develop action plans to improve student attendance. Milwaukee's Alliance for Attendance includes students, parents, business leaders, philanthropists, social services providers, educators, faith community leaders, government officials, health professionals, community-based organizations, and law enforcement officers. It held its fifth summit on school attendance Nov. 2.

Based on the attendance and truancy prevention work by the Milwaukee Alliance, the Green Bay, Racine, and Menominee Indian school districts started Alliance for Attendance projects in their communities. Beloit, Janesville, Kenosha, and Madison are beginning Alliance initiatives that will work on improving student attendance in school.

"No one group can solve the problem of truancy alone," Burmaster said. "By working together to engage students in learning and regular school attendance, we build a foundation for student success. There must be the expectation that school attendance is vital, so we can reduce truancy, boost academic achievement, and have a positive impact on the lives and futures of our students."

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